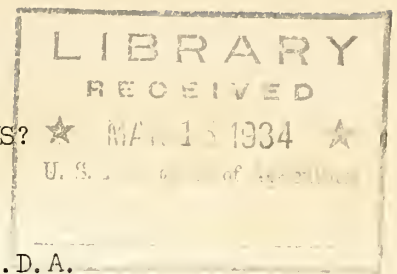


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DO FARMERS NEED FARM RECORD BOOKS?



Radio Talk

By

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It is unnecessary for me to emphasize in this brief discussion today that agriculture in the United States has been critically ill. We all appreciate that fact. However, this illness is not a sudden occurrence. It is a chronic condition which has been expelling its poisons into our agricultural system for a period of years. Being chronic, and being cumulative, it reached a point where major remedies were required. These remedial measures are now being applied with many evidences of improvement in the patient's condition.

Permanent improvement in agriculture depends very largely upon the individual farmer's full appreciation of his part in the agricultural body and the relation of his activities to the well being of the group as a whole.

To this end, it is necessary for each farmer to maintain some record of his business. The Agricultural Adjustment Administration in its measures to correct the maladjustments that prevail in agriculture, has found that relatively few farmers have such records. Realizing the importance of such records not only as an aid to farmers in filling out contracts and proving compliance, but also in providing a basis for individual farm analysis, as well as, collectively, a basis for more adequate agricultural planning, the Agricultural Adjustment Administration has cooperated with the Federal Office of Cooperative Extension Work in preparing a record book for the use of farmers. These record books have just come off the press and will be available to cooperating farmers in control programs through your local county agent within the next few weeks.

This book is simple in form and adaptable to almost any type of farming. It is so arranged that a strictly crop farmer need use only one part of the book rather than having to leaf through all the pages. Being of a simplified form it is not intended or expected to replace any books now being used in any of the States, but is intended merely as a supplement to these books. Many farmers who do not desire to keep a more complete set of accounts will find this book very useful and easy to keep up to date. However, those farmers wishing a book which will enable them to make a complete farm analysis should get a copy of the record book distributed by their State College of Agriculture through the county agents.

Almost immediately visible benefits will accrue to those who avail themselves of such record books and make use of them. Farmers contracting with the Government in the production adjustment programs who have such records available will have easily accessible most of the information required for the filling out of contracts and for the proving of compliance with these contracts. Likewise by having such records available they should be able to obtain their benefit payments much more quickly than those who do not have such records. These records should also be valuable to farmers making applications for loans.

Further benefits should accrue to the individual farmer keeping such records through some simple analyses of his farm business which are thus made possible.

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These benefits are very much enhanced when it is possible for the individual farmer to compare his own farm business with others in his area and thus determine wherein his farm business is weak. Plans are already under way in some areas to make average figures available by counties or smaller units for such comparisons.

Many of our State Agricultural Colleges have done excellent work in opening such opportunities to farmers of their respective areas. A recent report issued by the Department of Agricultural Economics of the University of Illinois indicates how such material is being used to promote a better understanding on the part of the individual farmer of the problems which face him. This report, based on complete financial records from 135 Illinois farms during the three-year period 1930, 1931, and 1932, clearly portrays the fact that farm businesses well planned and economically operated pay a return very much greater than those farms with less efficient management. Furthermore, this report points out the practices which tended to promote this efficiency and the ones which tended to reduce the profits on these farms.

Those farmers obtaining the greatest return for their year's work made more effective uses of their time and marketed their produce at a higher price. They also planned their crop rotations to include a larger percentage of the more profitable crops, fed their livestock more efficiently, and kept their expenses low in relation to their gross income. Such efficiency came about only through an intensive study of the farm problems and intelligent planning as a result of such study. This study and planning was possible only when the farmer had some record of his own farm business.

The spread of such record keeping should prove to be of inestimable value in the development of a longtime program for agriculture. Recent developments in individual states and also in Federal plans clearly point to an agriculture founded on a logical plan rather than a haphazard procedure. Farm records, through providing the information as to yields of crops, income from individual enterprises and farm organization, should aid materially in the development of these plans.

It is necessary for each farmer to understand thoroughly the reasons for success or failure with his own farm business and the relation of his farm to the agricultural body as a whole, in order to accelerate the improvement of agriculture's position.

Certain records are required in proving compliance with contracts for production control by contracting farmers. This book which the Agricultural Adjustment Administration is making available provides a convenient form for that purpose. The book costs the farmer nothing and every contracting farmer is supposed to get a copy. As stated previously this record book has just come off the press and while methods of distribution may vary slightly in different states, your copy should be available within the next few weeks. If you are a contracting farmer and do not receive a book within the next few weeks from your local production control association or your county agent, write to your agent or the State Extension Service for your copy.